

SPECIAL EVENTS

*The Faculty of Music,
University of Toronto
Concert Hall,
Edward Johnson Building*

A Program of Piano Trios

*Lorand Fenyves, violin
Peter Schenkman, cello
Anton Kuerti, piano*

*Thursday, April 3rd, 1969
8:30 p.m.*

Program

TRIO IN B FLAT MAJOR KV 502

Mozart

Allegro

Larghetto

Allegretto

The Trio in B-flat is one of six such pieces which Mozart wrote for Viennese amateurs in 1786, all of which were titled "Terzett for Piano, Violin and Violoncello" by the composer. It is no accident that the piano is always listed first in such works, as the keyboard consistently takes the lead and in fact dominates much of the time. Such pieces fall clearly within the 18th century tradition of keyboard sonatas with the "accompaniment" of the violin or flute, as well as the violin and cello. In many of these compositions the violin was entirely optional. While the strings are hardly optional in the present instance, the piano invariably initiates new themes and there are frequent rests in the string parts.

In the first movement the piano dominates the initial theme. Only in the transitional episodes do violin and cello play prominent roles. The secondary theme is simply the first theme transposed to the dominant and slightly altered. This is given out first by the keyboard, but taken up immediately in the strings. The development is based largely on fresh material, given out by the violin.

The *Larghetto* is an expansive dialogue for piano and violin cast in ternary song form. Here the cello is little more than a continuo instrument supporting the bass line. Above this relatively simple harmonic framework the piano and violin trade eight and four measure phrases, occasionally coming together at important points of articulation. Here the emphasis is on decorative figures of the *galant* sort. For Mozart, though, they are not merely conventional ornaments, but an integral part of the melodic phrase.

The rondo finale is once again dominated by the keyboard. As in the first movement, violin and cello are prominent particularly in the subordinate episodes where there is considerable contrapuntal interplay.

TRIO IN E FLAT MAJOR OP. 70, No. 2

Beethoven

Poco sostenuto; Allegro ma non troppo

Allegretto

Allegretto ma non troppo

Allegro

Of Beethoven's eight piano trios, this is the sixth. The two trios opus 70 were composed in 1808 and first performed with the composer at the keyboard in the home of the Countess Marie Erdödy, to whom the set is dedicated. Here the piano is not so clearly dominant, and in fact the cello and violin are heard alone at the very outset of the *Poco sostenuto* in a canonic duet. The piano joins in at the third measure and dominates to the end of the introduction, whereupon the strings introduce the main theme of the *Allegro ma non troppo*. The remainder of the movement is a fairly straight-forward sonata in 6/8 time except for occasional references back to the canon of the introduction. It recurs both as a transitional theme in the main body of the movement and also, in more complete form, as part of the coda.

The *Allegretto* is cast in a curious kind of variation form. Themes in C-major and C-minor of approximately equal length, which are both harmonically self-sufficient, are heard one after the other. This pair is then heard twice more with figural variations. In the first variation the C-major theme is expanded to twice its length while the C-minor theme remains the same length. This procedure is reversed in variation two, with an extension of the C-minor music to form a coda which contains a brief reference to the C-major theme.

The following movement is in a more conventional Scherzo-Trio-Scherzo form, though in a tempo which is a bit more relaxed than the normal idea of a "Scherzo". Here the strings consistently take the lead, and the trio section features a dialogue between strings and piano in which the former are heard unaccompanied.

Harmonic ambiguity is the most notable feature of the *Allegro* finale. Here the second theme is in G rather than the expected B-flat. When this theme returns in the recapitulation it is in C-minor (the relative key to E-flat),

and for several pages the movement threatens to end in the wrong key. A coda nearly ninety measures in length, which is almost a second recapitulation, gets us back on the right harmonic track well before the close.

INTERMISSION

TRIO IN D MINOR OP. 63

Schumann

Mit Energie und Leidenschaft

Lebhaft, doch nicht zu rasch

Langsam, mit inniger Empfindung

Mit Feuer

The Trio in D-minor, op. 63 is the earliest of Schumann's three works in this medium, and was composed in the year 1847. Here there is an obvious attempt at a more integrated texture involving all three instruments, although the consistently heavy, rich piano writing tends to put the strings at a disadvantage. In fact there is scarcely a measure in the whole piece where any of the instruments are silent. The result is an extremely busy, often cluttered texture.

The first movement is in sonata form and presents three distinct themes in the exposition. The first reminds us of a similar theme in the later 3rd symphony, with its solemn pseudo-polyphony. A more clear-cut transitional idea gives way to a syncopated second theme which is also treated imitatively. The exposition closes with a reference to the first theme combined with the syncopated figure. In the midst of the longish development section there is a new theme played *sul ponticello* by violin and cello.

The second movement is a conventional Scherzo with Trio. Its main theme seems to allude to the transitional idea in dotted rhythm from the first movement. The following slow movement is a three part song form in A-minor with a quicker middle section in F-major. The movement ends on the dominant of the main key and leads directly to the D-major finale. In spite of its title, the principal theme of the finale is a very square tune in common time, although the transitional episodes do bring some of the promised sparkle. Secondary themes are distinctly subordinate. It is the first theme which receives most of the attention, both in the development and in the coda. Such tunes, however, seem to resist development, and can only be transposed, played faster or slower, louder or softer. In the coda Schumann attempts to infuse new life into the theme by a gradual *accelerando*, which closes the movement in brilliant style.

—Programme notes by Robert Falck